



## COUNCIL MINUTES

October 3, 2013

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 3, 2013 at 7:31 a.m.

### COUNCIL PRESENT

Alex Finter  
Christopher Glover  
Dennis Kavanaugh  
David Luna  
Dave Richins  
Scott Somers

### COUNCIL ABSENT

Scott Smith

### OFFICERS PRESENT

Christopher Brady  
Debbie Spinner  
Dee Ann Mickelsen

Vice Mayor Finter excused Mayor Smith from the entire meeting.

### 1. Review items on the agenda for the October 7, 2013 Regular Council meeting.

All of the items on the agenda were reviewed among Council and staff and the following was noted:

Conflict of interest: None

Items removed from the consent agenda: None

### 2. Hear a presentation, discuss and provide direction on the Transit Master Plan update.

Transit Services Director Jodi Sorrell reported that for the past few months, staff has been working on an update of the Transit Master Plan in conjunction with the General Plan and the Transportation Master Plan updates. She explained that the purpose of this agenda item was to review staff and the consultant's efforts thus far, in anticipation of the City's upcoming public outreach in the community. She introduced Planning Director John Wesley and Matthew Taunton, Senior Transportation Planner for HDR, the City's consultant, who were prepared to address the Council.

Mr. Wesley displayed a PowerPoint presentation (**See Attachment 1**) and offered brief historical background of the General Plan update. (See Pages 2 and 3 of Attachment 1) He stated that over the last 30 years, Mesa has grown rapidly and noted that the City anticipates an additional 170,000 residents in the future. He advised that with respect to the General Plan update, staff has focused on creating a more recognizable, self-sufficient community that attracts employment and provides a high-quality living environment.

Mr. Wesley, in addition, reviewed the three guiding principles of the General Plan update which include the following:

- Create and maintain a variety of great neighborhoods
- Grow and maintain stable and diverse jobs
- Provide rich public spaces and cultural resources

Mr. Wesley referenced a series of maps illustrating Mesa's current and future economic activity areas (See Page 5 of Attachment 1); projected residential and employment growth areas (See Page 6 of Attachment 1); and the character areas, which are designed to guide future development in the community. (See Page 7 of Attachment 1) He pointed out that one of the character types includes transit districts and added that Planning and Transit Services staff are assessing the most appropriate locations for high-capacity transit corridors, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) and light rail.

Ms. Sorrell continued with the presentation and advised that in October and November of this year, staff will conduct public outreach regarding the Transit Master Plan. She explained that staff will highlight three scenarios, which consist of short-term (5 to 10 years), mid-term (10 to 20 years) and long-term (20 to 30 years) timetables.

Ms. Sorrell briefly discussed the type of transit services that were in existence in Mesa in 2002 as compared to the present time. (See Pages 9 and 10 of Attachment 1) She indicated that Mesa currently has 17 local transit and regional routes and five express routes. She also noted that light rail service is available to Main Street and Sycamore and added that construction is currently underway to extend such service to Mesa Drive.

Ms. Sorrell, in addition, reviewed the themes of the Transit Master Plan as follows:

- Develop transit priority corridors
- Connect activity centers
- Prioritize frequency over coverage
- Balance local and regional transit needs

Discussion ensued relative to various opportunities that staff has taken into consideration with respect to the Transit Master Plan update (See Page 12 of Attachment 1); that one option of the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) intercity/commuter rail project is to connect the rail system to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport; and that when construction of light rail to Gilbert Road has been completed, it would be necessary for staff and the Council to consider whether to extend the line east along Main Street or south on Gilbert Road.

Mr. Taunton addressed the Council and displayed a map illustrating Mesa's existing transit system. (See Page 13 of Attachment 1) He stated that although the map shows the grid of services, it does not reflect a correlation to the frequency of the routes, with "frequent" being defined as 15-minute service or better in the peak hours. He noted that currently, light rail operates at 12-minute frequencies and added that both the LINK on Mesa Drive and Route 61 on Southern Avenue operate at 15-minute service intervals.

Mr. Taunton reviewed a map which reflects the average daily ridership by route in Mesa as opposed to the region as a whole. (See Page 15 of Attachment 1) He pointed out that light rail is the highest performer in the system and recognized Sycamore Station as having the highest ridership in the entire 20-mile METRO light rail line.

Mr. Taunton, in addition, highlighted a map titled "Boardings per Mile" (See Page 16 of Attachment 1), which illustrates that light rail, Route 61 on Southern Avenue, Route 96 on Dobson Road and Route 112 on Country Club Drive all perform well, which is indicative of the corridors that have the highest frequency of service. He added that this supports the concept of increasing frequency in the highest density corridors in the region.

Mr. Taunton reported that he was prepared to discuss the three scenarios and stated that he would use the existing high-capacity transit network as a basis for the discussion. (See Page 17 of Attachment 1) He explained that when City staff and HDR developed the transit scenarios, they considered the following issues: 1.) The high-capacity transit network as it functions today and as it is planned in the future; 2.) A transit propensity analysis, which reviews data for transit dependency, such as low-income areas and populations under the age of 18 or over 65; and 3.) Land use and character areas coordination. He indicated that not only was there a significant return on investment in terms of ridership when higher density areas are served, but also when areas are "in a scale" that is appropriate to transit services.

Mr. Taunton provided an extensive overview of the three scenarios. His comments included, but were not limited to, the following:

#### Short Term – High Capacity Transit (See Page 18 of Attachment 1)

- This option would correlate to the opening of the Gilbert Road light rail extension in 2018.
- Main Street LINK service, which currently operates out of Sycamore Station, would originate from downtown Mesa with the Mesa Drive light rail extension. With the Gilbert Road extension, the service would originate at Gilbert Road and continue to serve Superstition Springs.
- The LINK service on Country Club Drive/Arizona Avenue currently operates at a 25-minute frequency. Ultimately, the standard for that type of service will be 15 minutes, which will require that the service is doubled. Possible trips could be on Dobson Road and Southern Avenue.
- By having a route that would originate from and terminate at the Sycamore Station, travel south on Dobson Road and east on Southern Avenue through the Fiesta District would allow the City to capitalize on the emerging development in those areas.
- The bolded lines depicted on the Short Term network (See Page 19 of Attachment 1) represent a new alignment, route or a new frequency increase. There would be an opportunity for Route 96, which travels north on Dobson Road, to connect to Riverview and interline with Route 62 in Tempe, which currently terminates at Tempe Marketplace.
- Route 120 on Mesa Drive and Route 128 on Stapley Drive will increase in ridership as light rail extends east along Main Street. Currently, the routes do not extend farther south into Gilbert and the Town of Gilbert has not demonstrated much interest in extending those lines. One possible option would be to connect both routes into a loop, which would allow for increased circulation in Mesa.

Mid Term 1 – High Capacity Transit (See Pages 20 and 21 of Attachment 1)

Mid Term 2 – High Capacity Transit (See Pages 22 and 23 of Attachment 1)

Mr. Taunton advised that the Mid Term 1 option could extend light rail east along Main Street from Gilbert Road to Power Road. He explained that the LINK service that currently operates on Main Street and Power Road would be modified so that it only operates on Power Road. He clarified, however, that it would operate south of Superstition Springs and connect with the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

Mr. Taunton referred to a map that orients north-south bus service around the proposed light rail station locations. (See Page 21 of Attachment 1) He stated that the map also depicts the light rail stations east of Gilbert Road situated every two miles, as opposed to the current one-mile spacing, with north-south service intersecting those station locations. He added that this scenario would extend east-west transit service to Ellsworth Road.

Mr. Taunton commented that regarding the Mid Term 2 option, light rail could be extended south on Gilbert Road and either go east in the US 60 right-of-way or on Southern Avenue. (See Page 22 of Attachment 1) He said that this scenario illustrates the light rail line terminating at the US 60 at Greenfield Road and added that the Main Street LINK, which originates at Gilbert Road, would continue to function in the same manner.

Mr. Taunton further discussed the Long Term 1 – High Capacity Transit (See Pages 24 and 25 of Attachment 1) and the Long Term 2 – High Capacity Transit scenarios. (See Pages 26 and 27 of Attachment 1) He stated that the outcome of these scenarios is dependent in large part upon what occurs with respect to ADOT's passenger rail project. He explained that ADOT is considering three alternative routes, two of which pass through Mesa and the third follows the I-10 alignment between Tucson and Phoenix.

Mr. Taunton referenced a map (See Page 24 of Attachment 1) and reported that the green line illustrates the proposed passenger rail corridor from the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport that follows the Ellsworth alignment up to the US 60, the 101 and the 202. He pointed out that this alternative would function in ADOT's freeway right-of-way. He also commented that such an option would impact how light rail service would be structured in the future and reinforce Superstition Springs as "the hub" for transit service in the East Valley.

Mr. Taunton, in addition, displayed a map (See Page 25 of Attachment 1), which depicts the expanded transit network under this scenario. He explained that an important consideration for Mesa was how best to serve the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport in the future via transit. He explained that today, most transit opportunities are oriented on the west side of the airport, but noted that the long-term plan is for the development of a terminal located on the east side of the airport. He stated that population and employment growth was also forecast for the east side of the facility. He added that ultimately, wherever the hub of service is located, it must be the transit distribution point. He remarked that Mesa would like to avoid a situation similar to what occurred at the Scottsdale Airpark, which is the third largest employment center in the region, and yet difficult to serve from a transit perspective since everything is decentralized and cut off from each side of the airport.

Mr. Taunton advised that with respect to the Long Term 2 – High Capacity Transit scenario (See Page 26 of Attachment 1), the passenger rail project would use the existing Union Pacific rail

corridor (the Phoenix Southeast Subdivision). He said that in this scenario, light rail would come down Gilbert Road and extend east to Superstition Springs via the US 60 right-of-way.

Responding to a question from Councilmember Richins, Mr. Taunton verified that of the two ADOT passenger rail options that pass through Mesa, one would follow Ellsworth Road and the US 60 right-of-way, while the second alternative would follow the above-mentioned Union Pacific right-of-way.

Mr. Taunton further referenced a map that supports the Long Term 2 transit network. (See Page 27 of Attachment 1) He explained that this alternative would “serve the core of Mesa” and connect the Downtown District and the Fiesta District not only through increased LINK service, but also with light rail extension.

Ms. Sorrell reiterated that staff will present the three scenarios to the public in conjunction with the General Plan outreach meetings. She said that in addition, staff will conduct their technical analysis and modeling of the various scenarios and develop an implementation plan.

In response to a question from Councilmember Richins, Ms. Sorrell clarified that in the next month, ADOT will conduct its own public outreach with respect to all three scenarios.

Mr. Taunton commented that any decisions with respect to light rail and commuter rail would be determined on a regional basis. He also noted that the local communities would be “the drivers” with respect to alignment options.

Vice Mayor Finter stated that he would hope that the Gateway area is served with commuter rail in the future.

Mr. Taunton responded that a few years ago, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) conducted a commuter rail study. He said that the study revealed that the Union Pacific corridor (i.e., the Phoenix Southeast Subdivision), which cuts through Mesa, was rated the highest performing corridor in the region.

Vice Mayor Finter thanked everyone for the informative presentation.

3. Acknowledge receipt of minutes of various boards and committees.

3a. Museum and Cultural Advisory Board meeting held July 25, 2013.

3b. Human Relations Advisory Board meeting held August 24, 2013.

It was moved by Councilmember Somers, seconded by Councilmember Glover, that receipt of the above-listed minutes be acknowledged.

Vice Mayor Finter declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

4. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

Councilmember Kavanaugh:	GAIN Kickoff Event at the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT); Building Strong Neighborhoods – District 3; Family Self-Sufficiency Graduation Program
Councilmember Somers:	National League of Cities’ Public Safety and Crime Prevention Committee Meeting
Councilmember Luna:	THINKspot Grand Opening and Open House at the Red Mountain Library

5. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Christopher Brady stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Monday, October 7, 2013, TBA – Study Session

Monday, October 7, 2013, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:02 a.m.

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ALEX FINTER, VICE MAYOR

ATTEST:

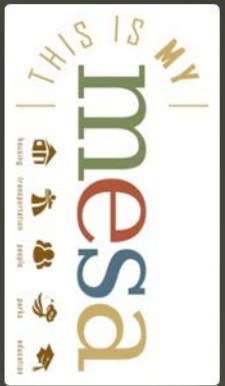
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DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 3rd day of October, 2013. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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DEE ANN MICKELSEN, CITY CLERK

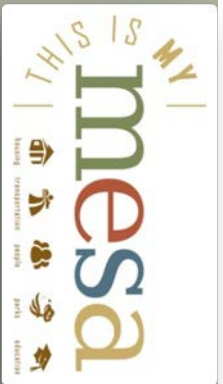


# Transit Master Plan Update



City Council Study Session

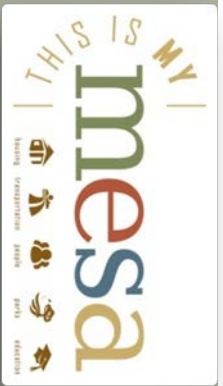
October 3, 2013



# Background

- ☞ Mesa has grown rapidly over the last 30 years
- ☞ Expect an additional 170,000 residents over next 30 years
- ☞ Time to update plan for this time period
- ☞ Focus has been trying to answer the question: *What do we need to do to create a more recognizable, self-sufficient city that attracts employment and provides a high quality living environment?*





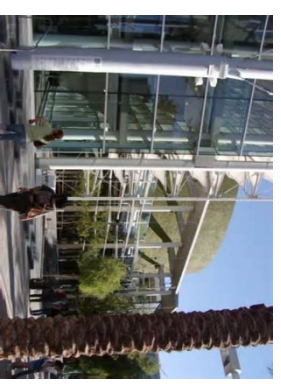
# Focus for General Plan Update

- ∞ Put the “general” back into the General Plan
- ∞ Emphasis on quality
- ∞ More flexible land use based on character areas
- ∞ Useful and usable document
  - Focus long term vision with key goals, policies and strategies
  - Supplement with functional and area plans



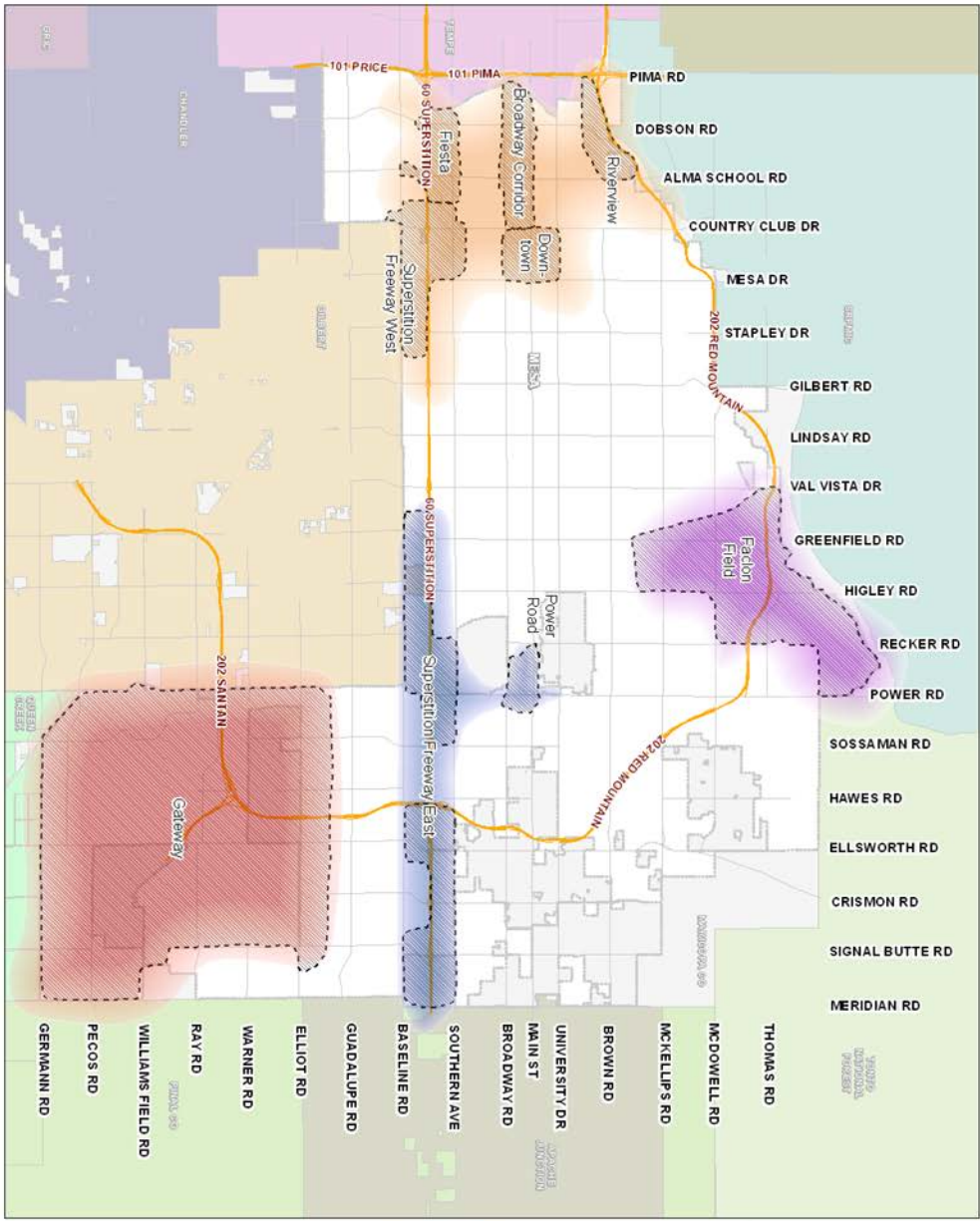
# 3 Guiding Principles

- ∞ Create and Maintain a Variety of Great Neighborhoods
- ∞ Grow and maintain stable and diverse jobs
- ∞ Provide rich public spaces and cultural resources





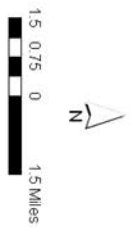
# Stable, Diverse Jobs



MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN:  
 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AREAS



- Economic Activity Areas**
- Falcon
  - Gateway
  - West Mesa
  - Superstition Springs/  
Power Road Corridor
- Economic Activity Districts**
- Districts

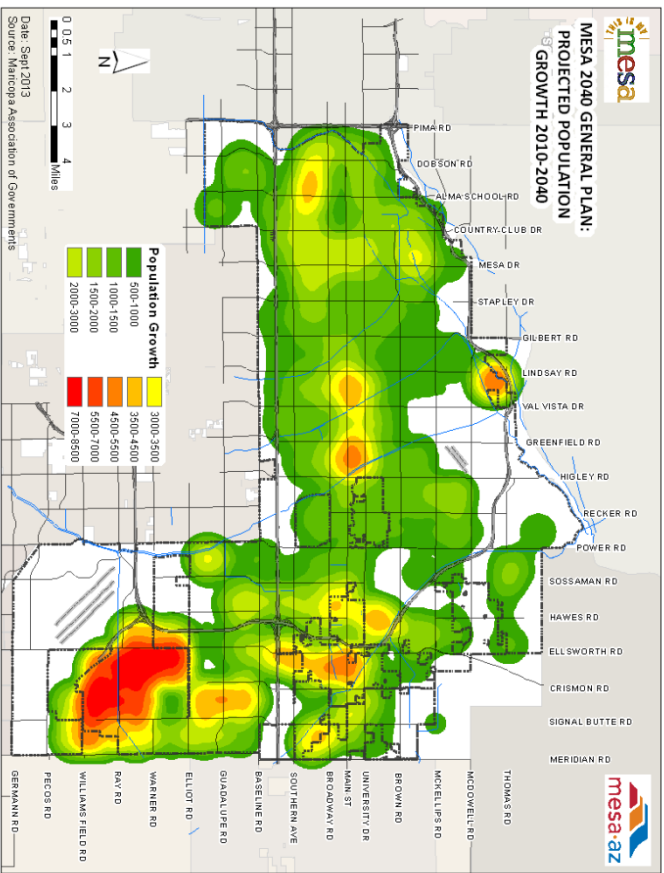




# Projected Growth

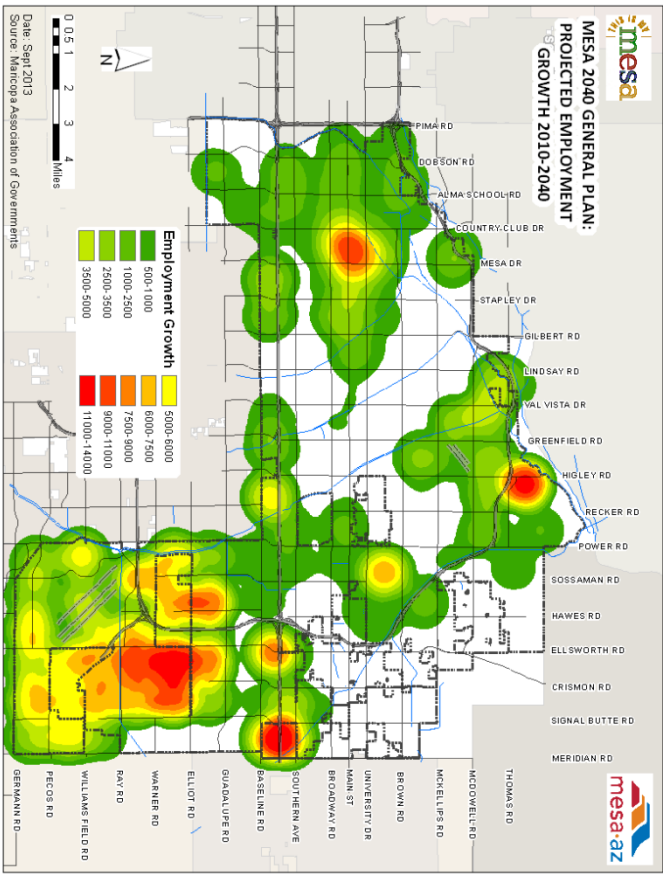
Employment Growth:

130,000 Additional Jobs



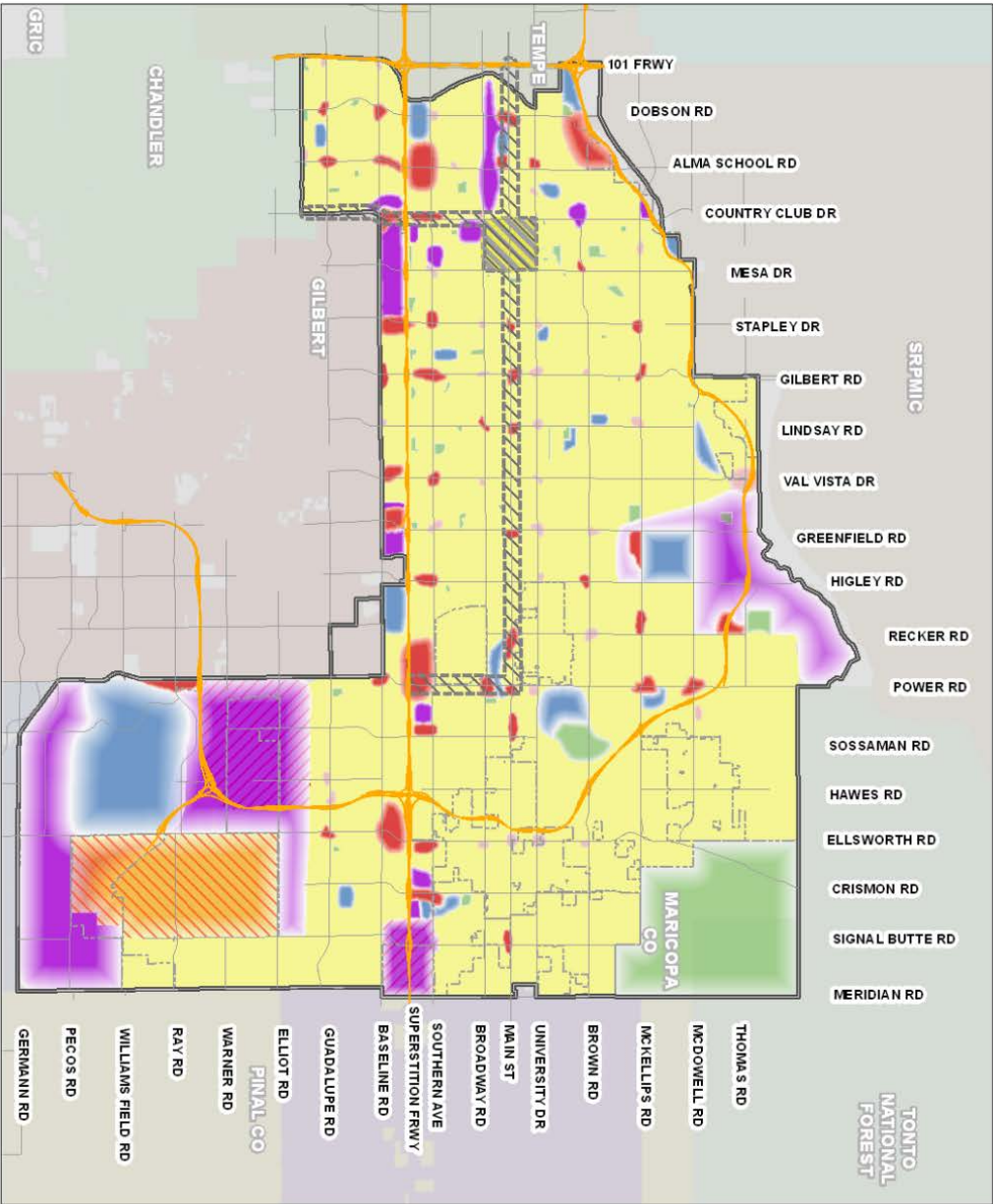
Population Growth:

170,000 Additional Residents





# Character Areas



**mesa**.az  
 MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN:  
 CHARACTER AREAS



- Character Areas**
- Downtown
  - Park
  - Mixed Use Community
  - Neighborhood Village Center
  - Mixed Use Activity District
  - Specialty District
  - Employment
  - Neighborhoods
  - Employment / Mixed Use Activity District
  - Transit Corridor

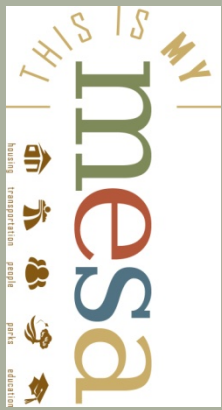




# Today's Purpose

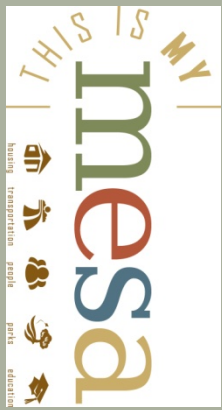
Share with Council the short, mid and long term scenarios for the Transit Master Plan Update

- Short Term – 5-10 years
- Mid Term – 10-20 Years
- Long Term 20-30 years



# Where we were in 2002

- ∞ 12 local transit routes and four express routes
- ∞ No transit service on Sundays
- ∞ One transfer center located at the Senior Center
- ∞ No light rail service



# Where we are now

- ⌘ 17 local transit and regional routes and five express routes
- ⌘ Extended service hours including weekends
- ⌘ Two transit centers and four Park-and-Ride locations
- ⌘ Light Rail service to Main Street and Sycamore
- ⌘ Construction of the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension and planning extension to Gilbert Road



# Themes

- ∞ Develop transit priority corridors
- ∞ Connect activity centers
- ∞ Prioritize frequency over coverage
- ∞ Balance local and regional transit needs



# Opportunities

## ∞ Intercity/commuter rail

- Connect Gateway

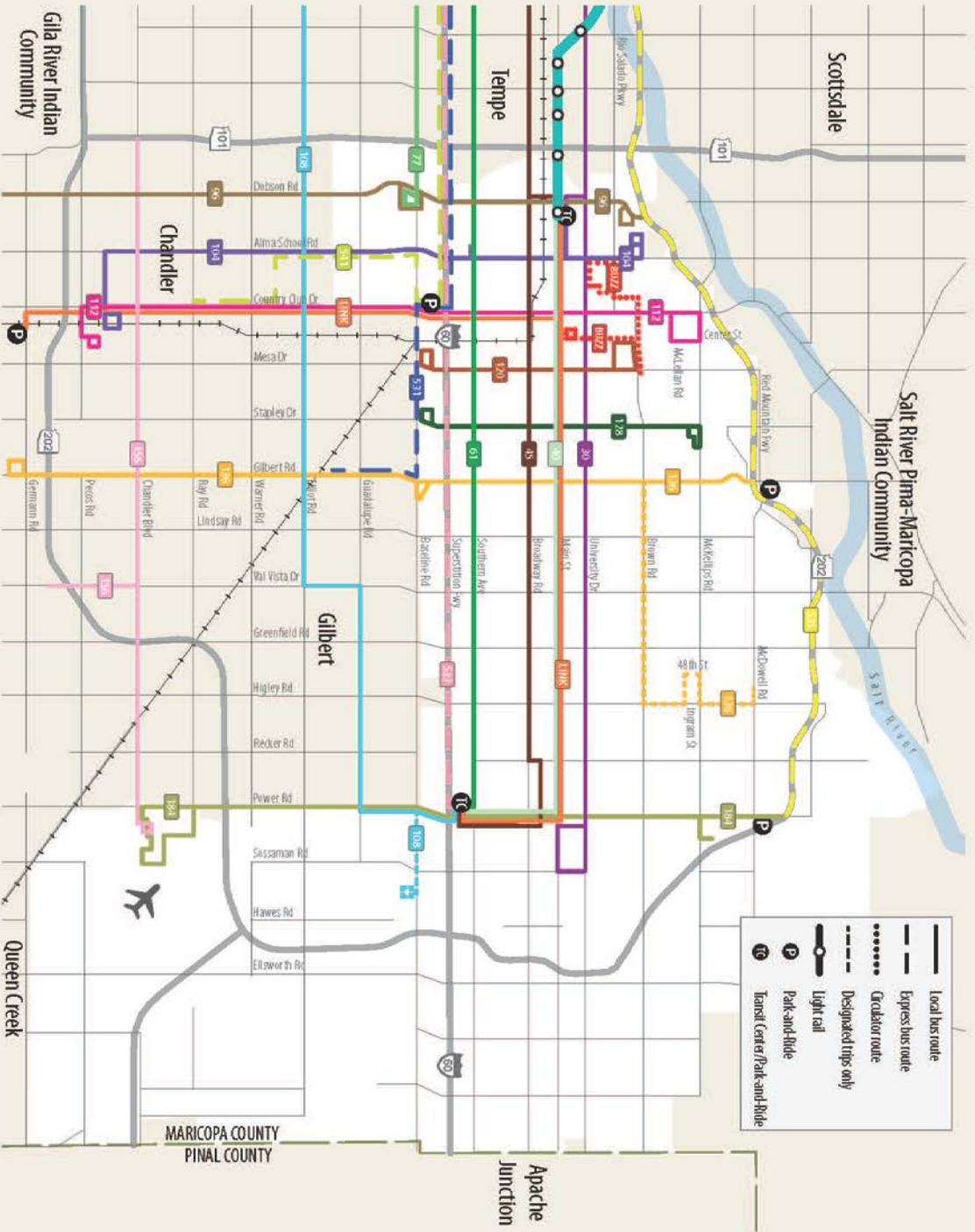
## ∞ Light rail

- Extend east or south from Gilbert Rd?

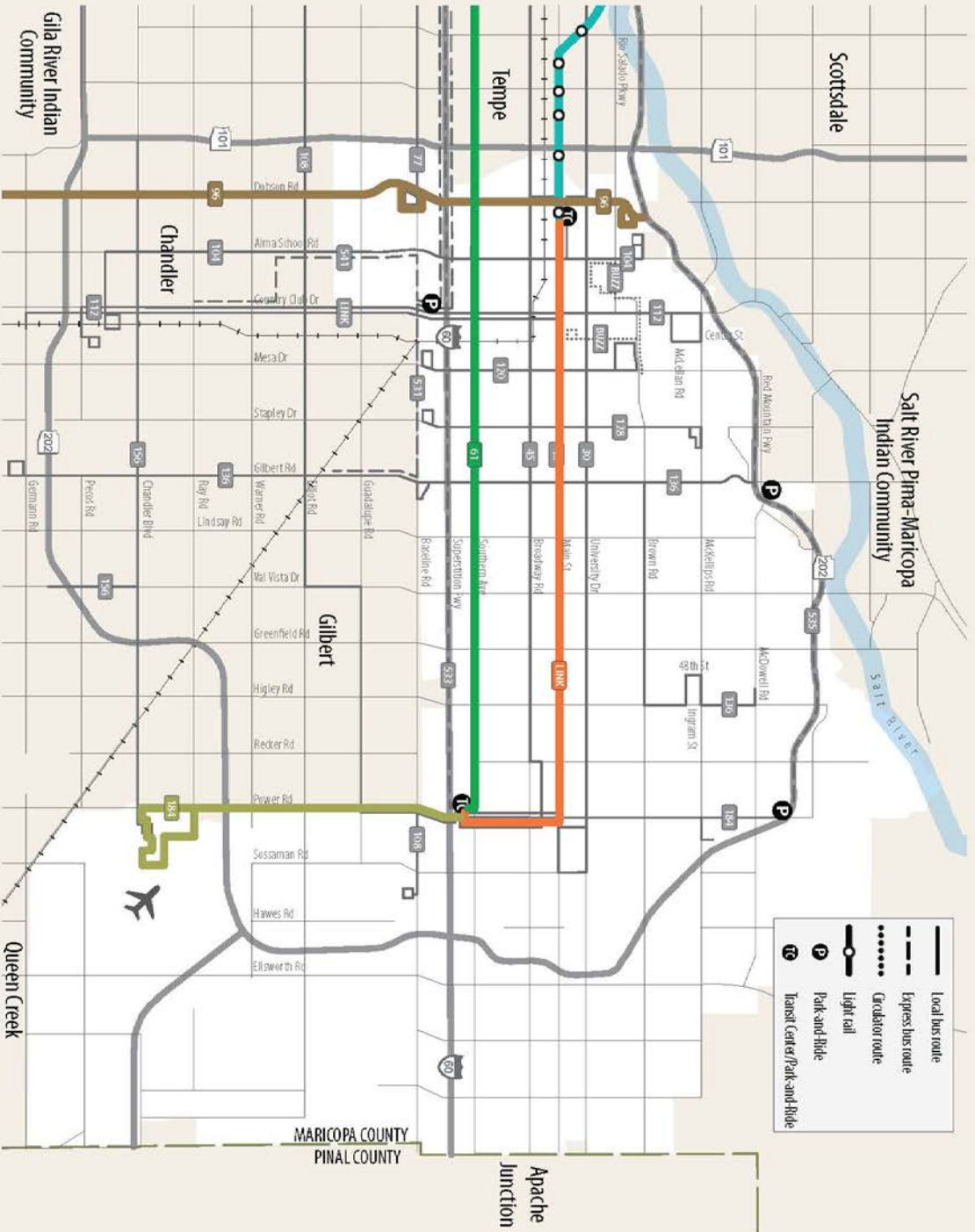
## ∞ Bus

- Transit priority corridors
- Performance standards/measures

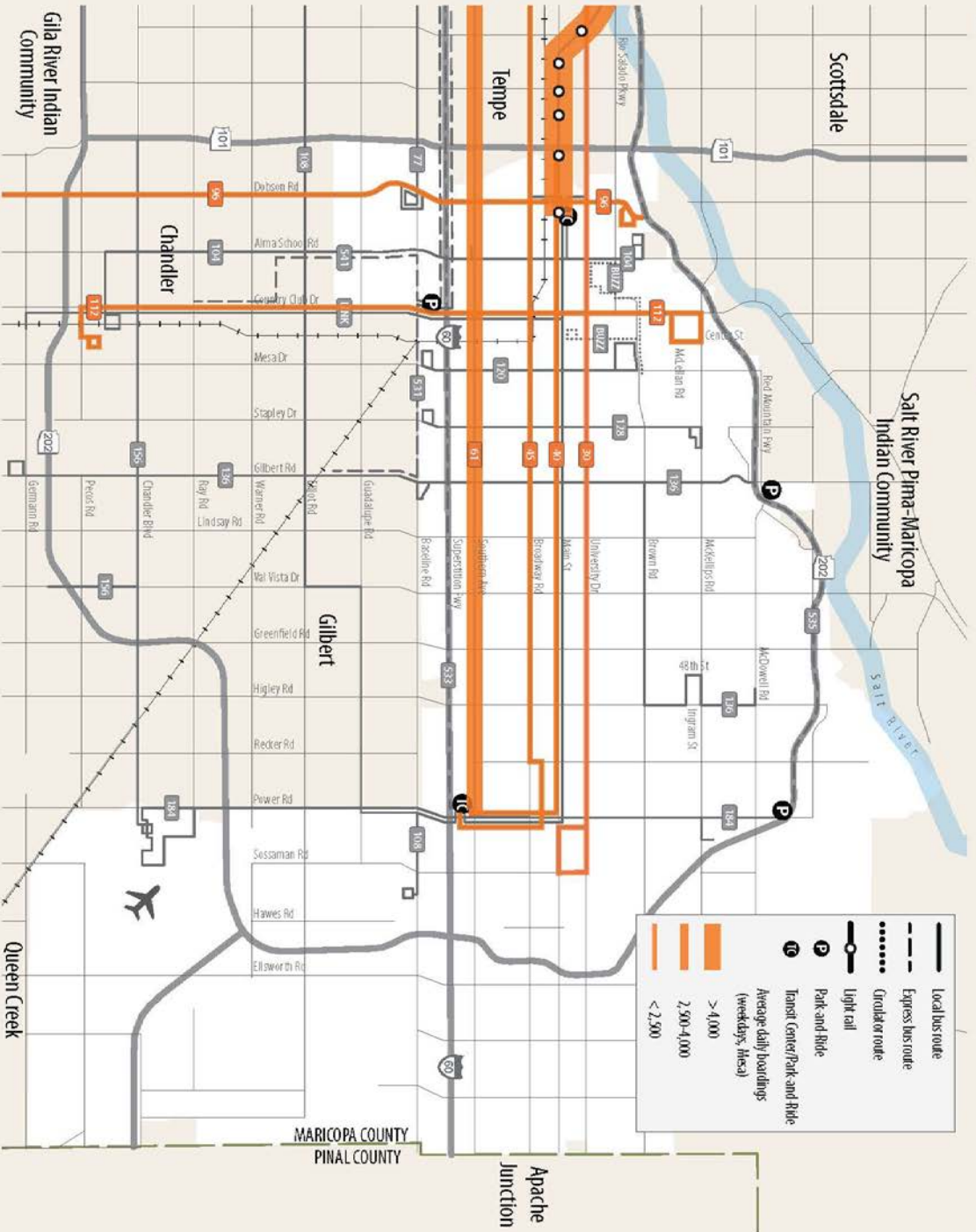
# Existing Transit System



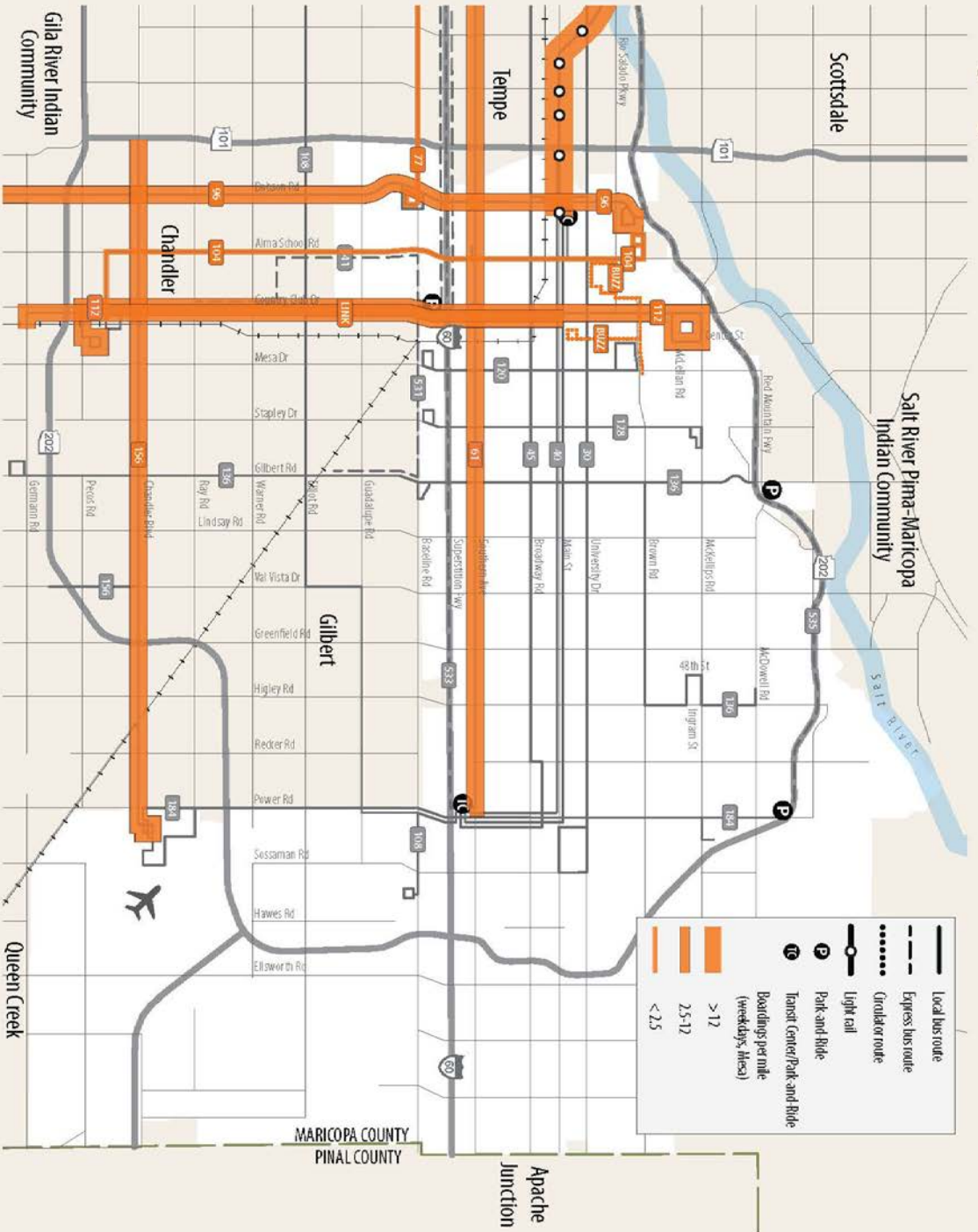
# High Frequency Routes



# Average Daily Boardings



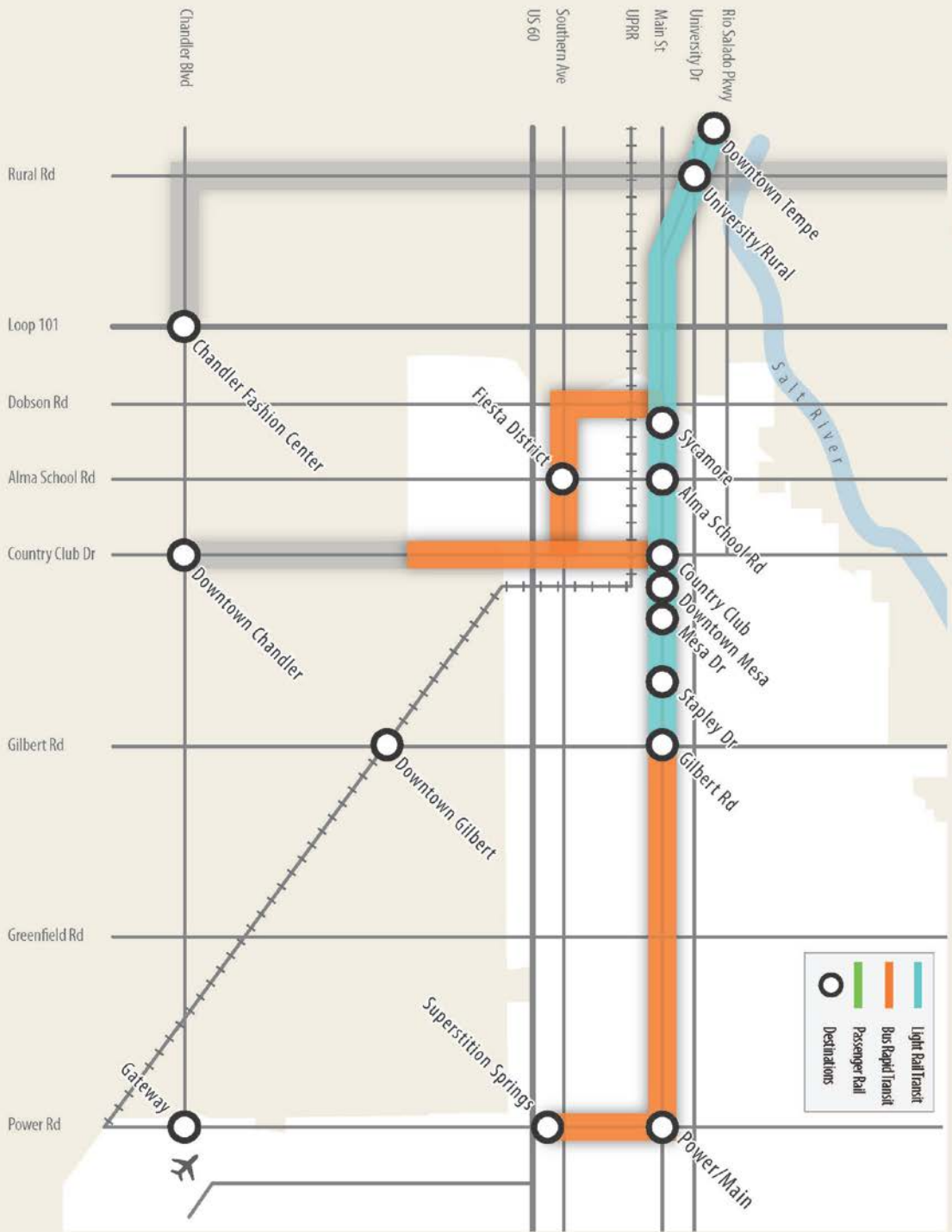
# Boardings per Mile



# Existing Condition - High Capacity Transit

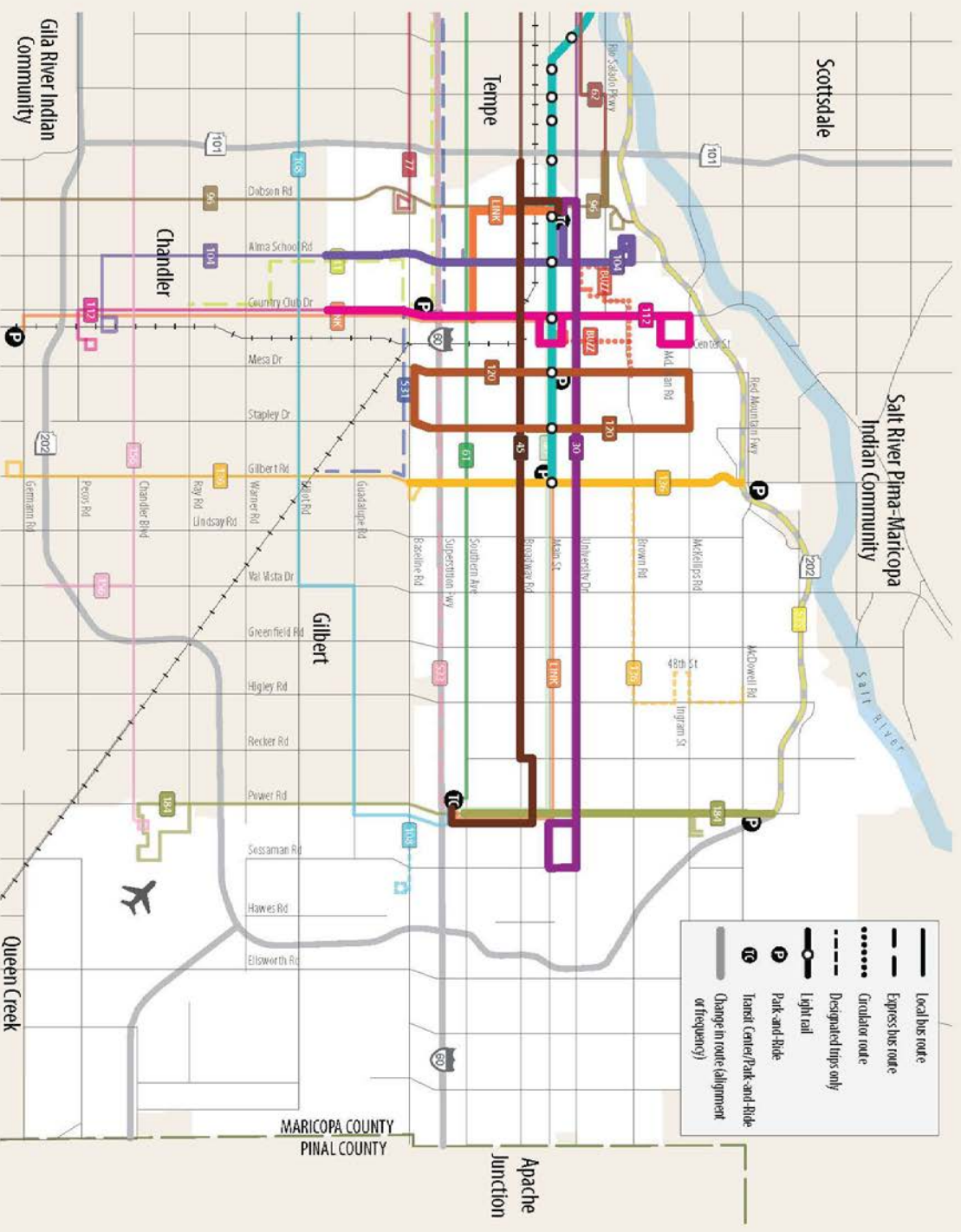


# Short Term - High Capacity Transit

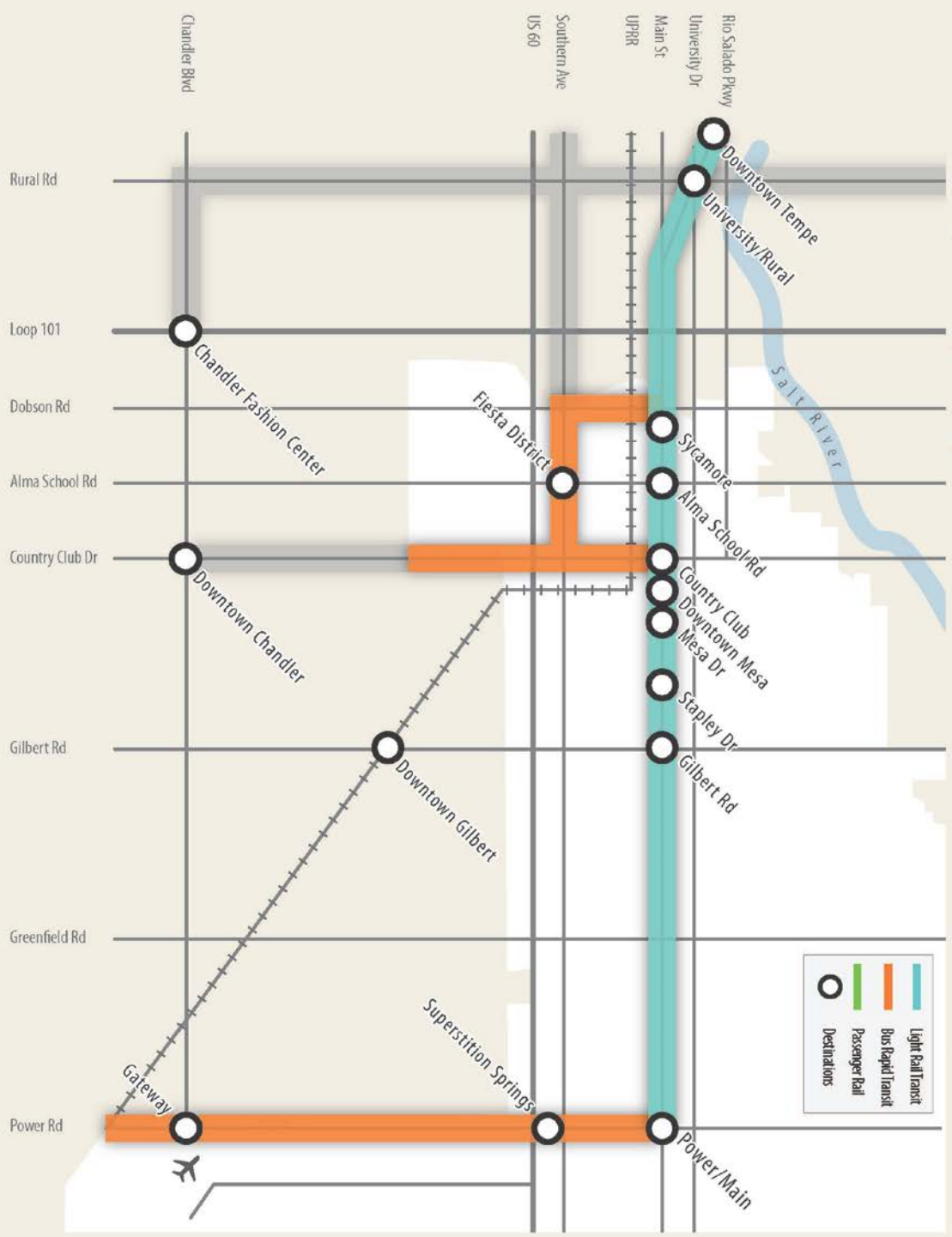




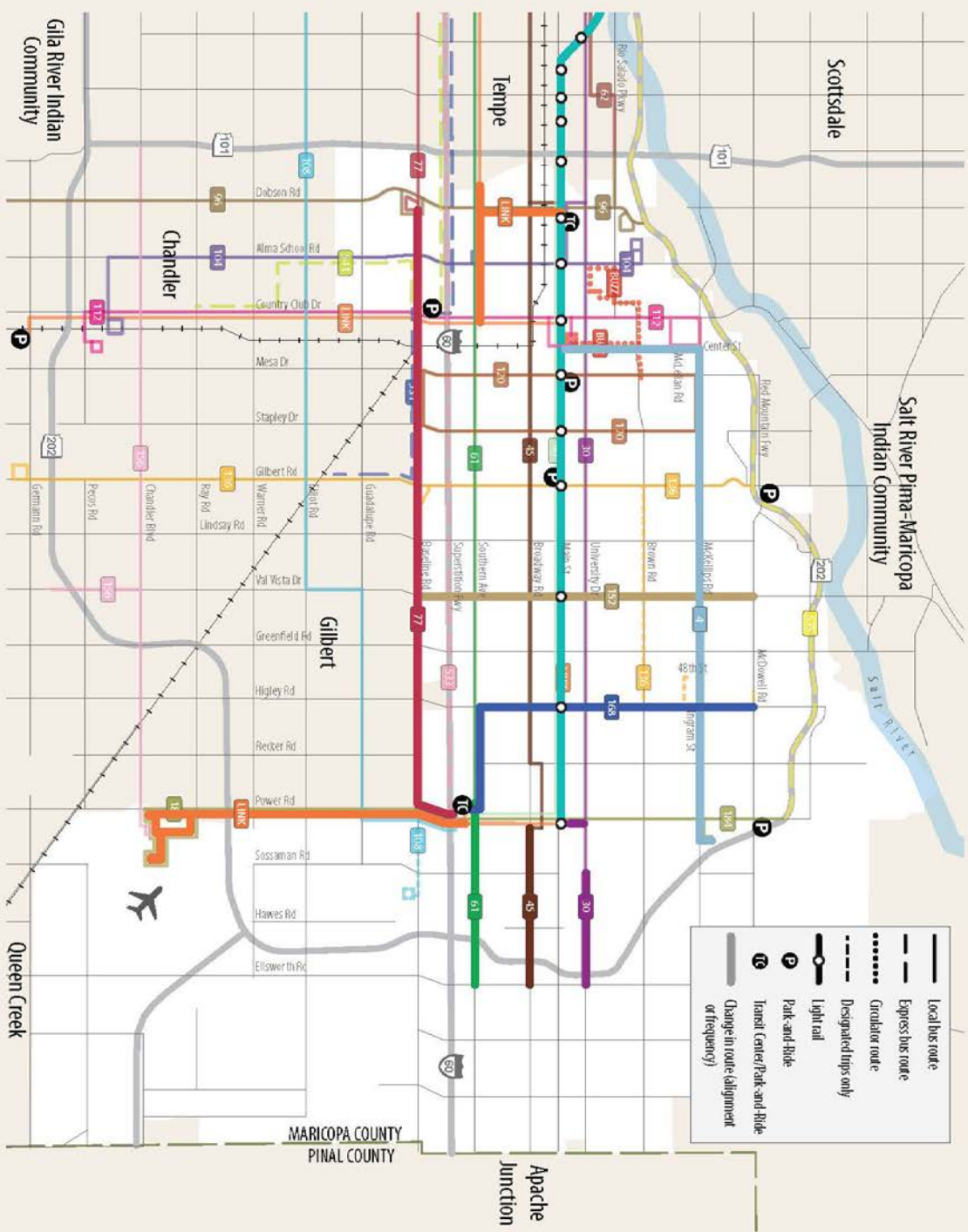
# Short Term



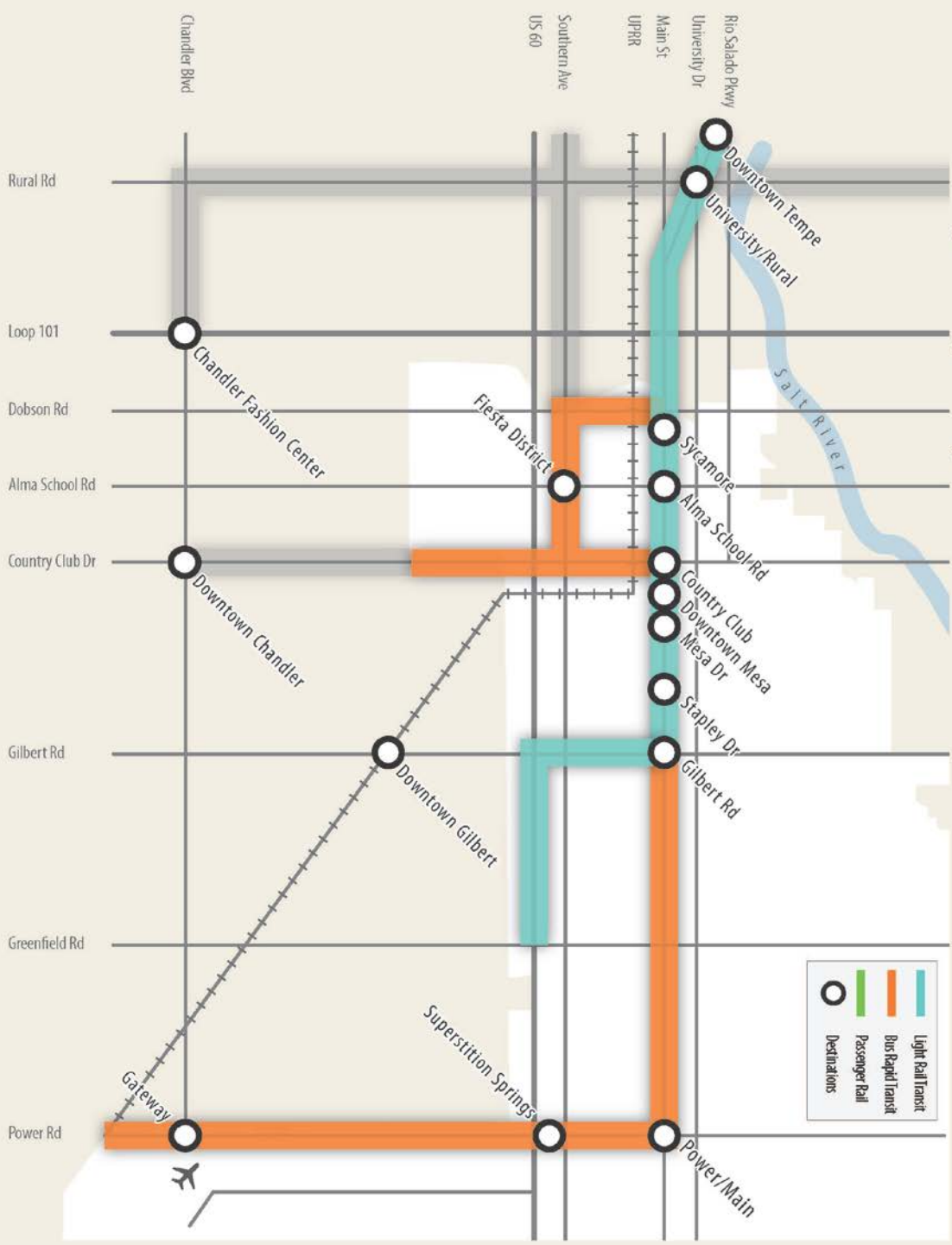
# Mid Term 1 - High Capacity Transit



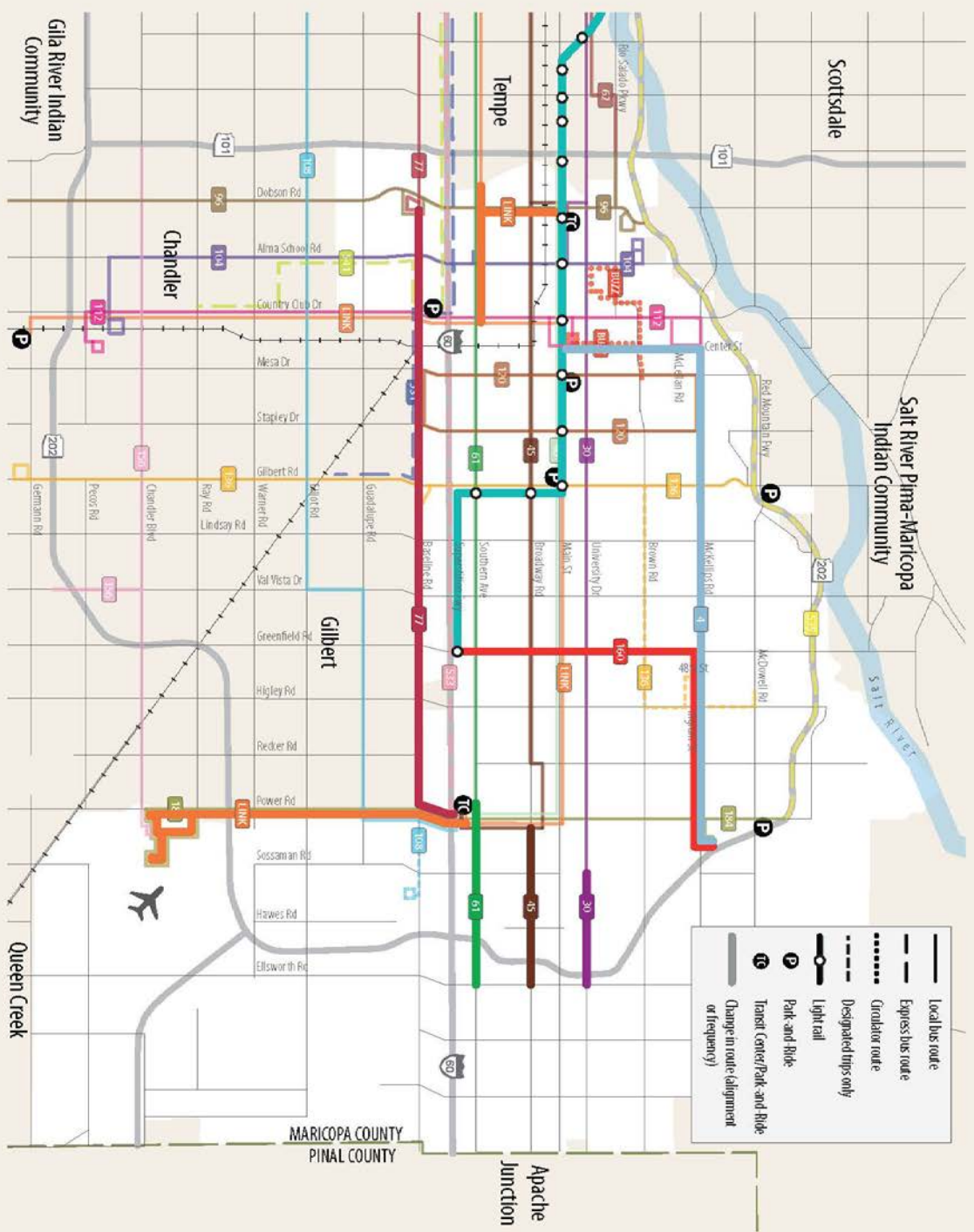
# Mid Term 1



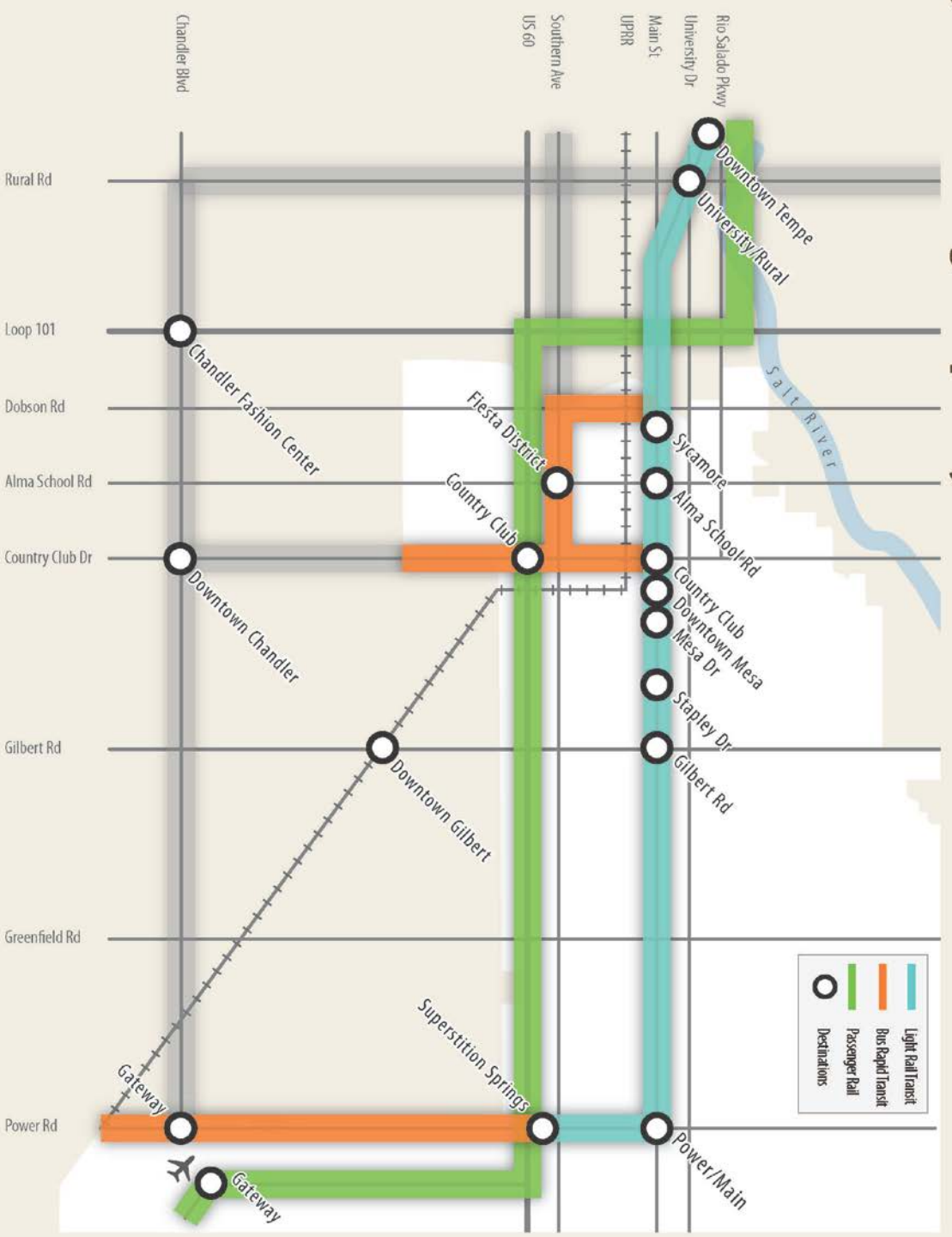
# Mid Term 2 - High Capacity Transit



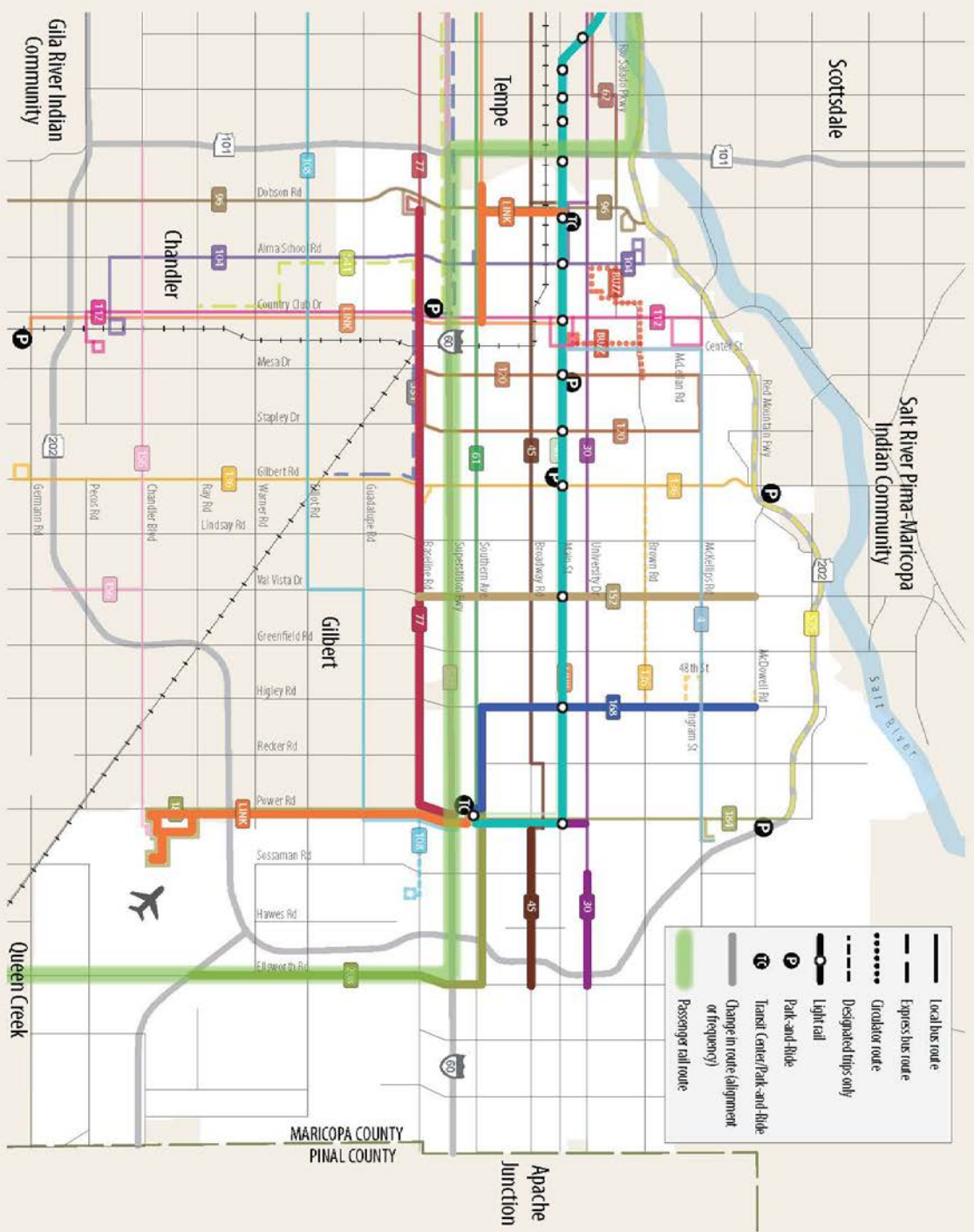
# Mid Term 2



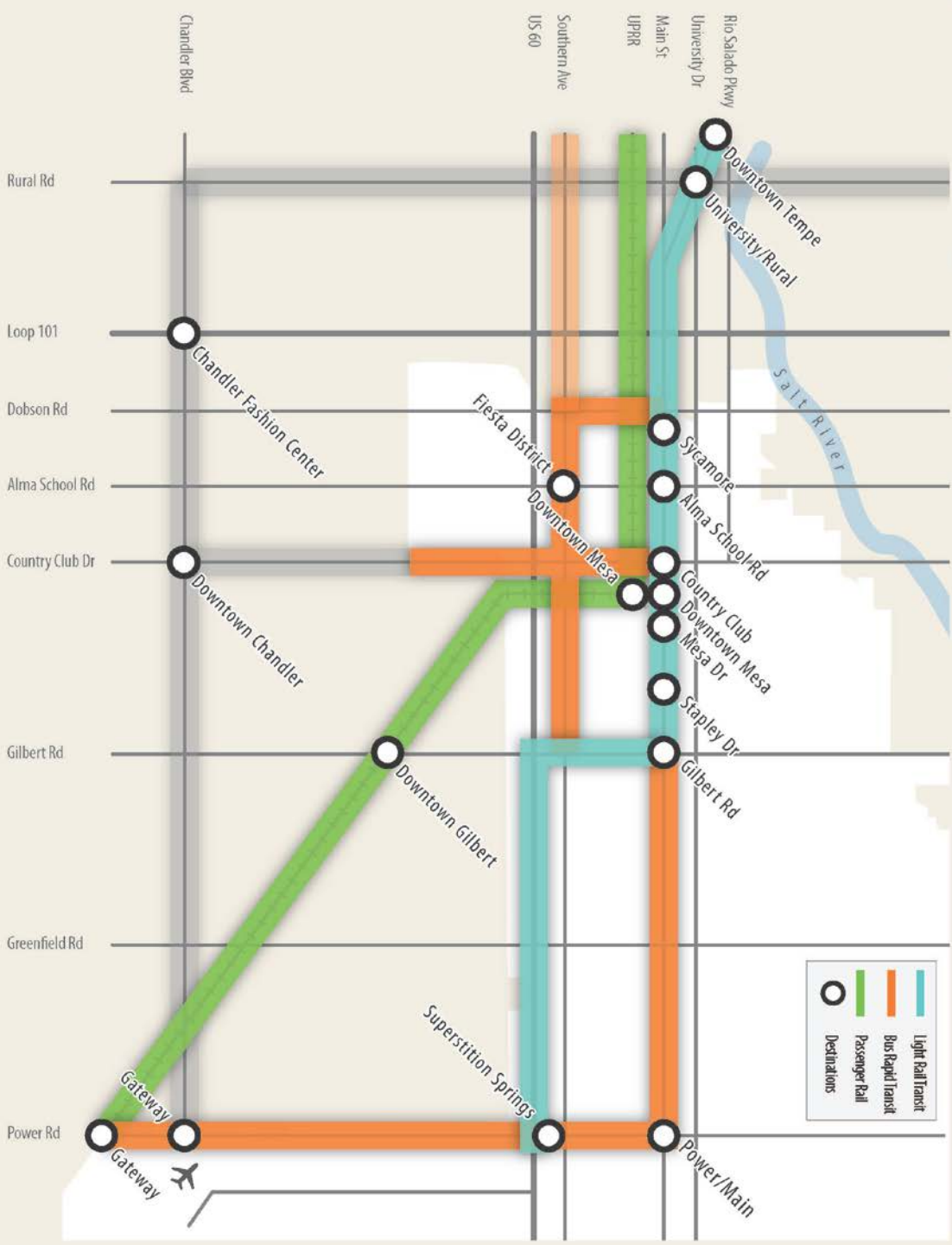
# Long Term 1 - High Capacity Transit



# Long Term 1



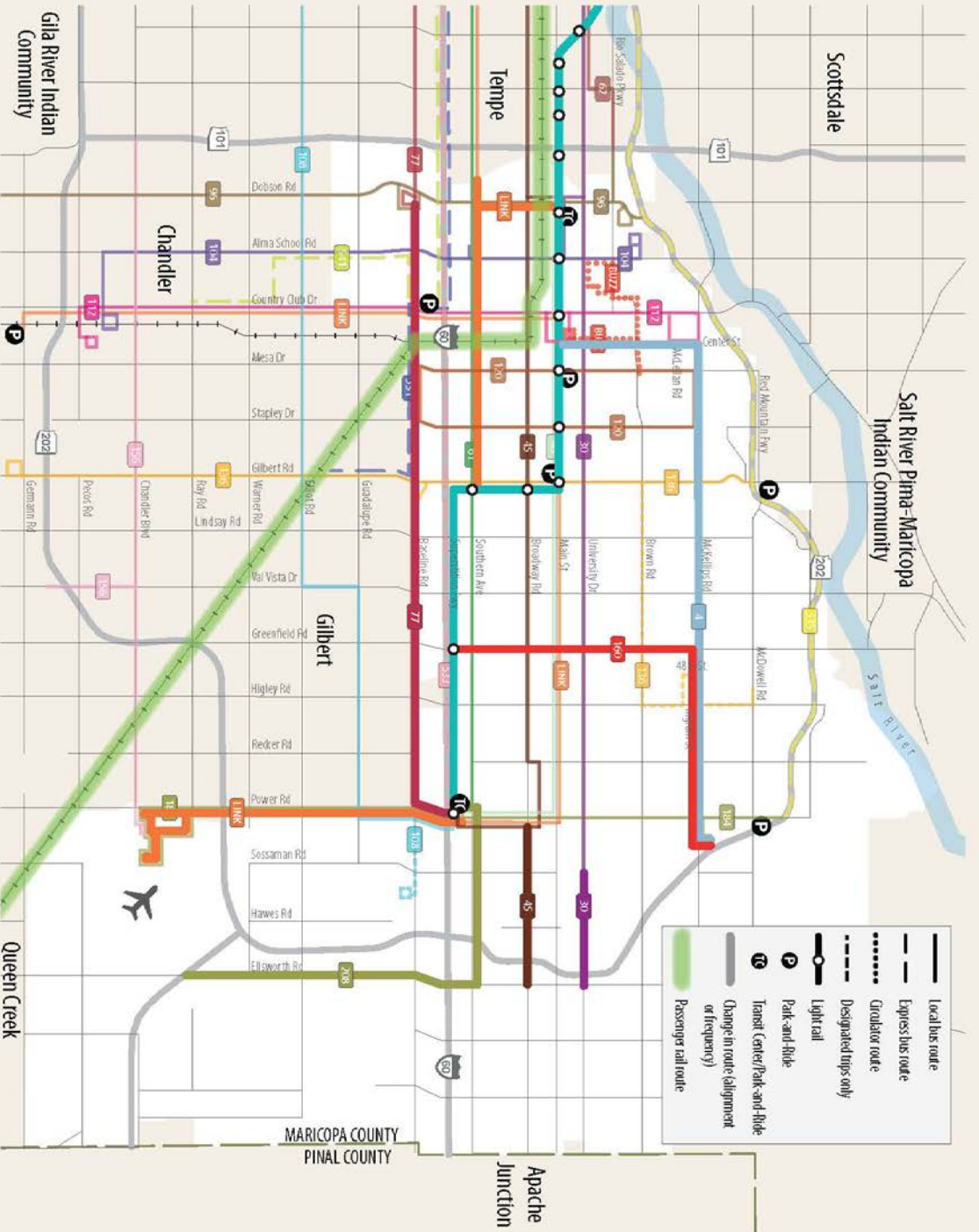
# Long Term 2 - High Capacity Transit



mesa transit master plan



# Long Term 2





# Next Steps

## Public Outreach

- General Plan Meetings

## Modeling

## Implementation Plan